

# KNOW YOUR CATCH

Your Guide to Fish Identification

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT  
OF CONSERVATION

FIS 018 01/2020

## Largemouth bass

scales on cheek are same size as on body

two fins not well connected

smooth tongue

upper jaw extends beyond back of eye

dark horizontal stripe



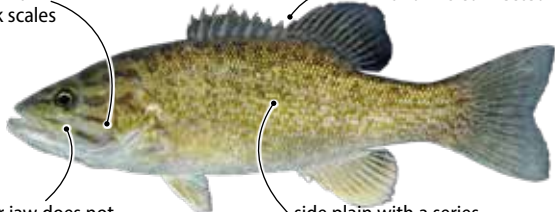
## Smallmouth bass

very small cheek scales

two fins connected

upper jaw does not extend beyond back of eye

side plain with a series of separate vertical bars



## Spotted bass

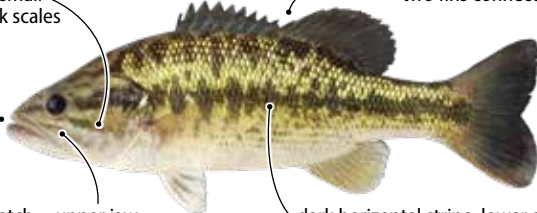
very small cheek scales

two fins connected

rough patch on tongue

upper jaw does not reach back of eye

dark horizontal stripe, lower side with series of dark horizontal streaks



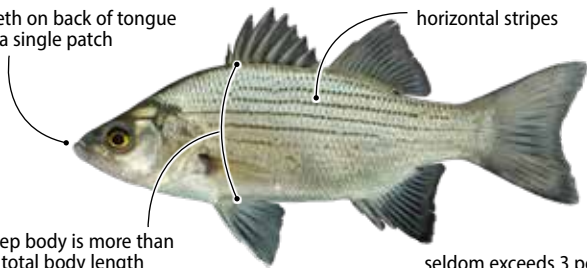
## White bass

teeth on back of tongue  
in a single patch

horizontal stripes

deep body is more than  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  total body length

seldom exceeds 3 pounds



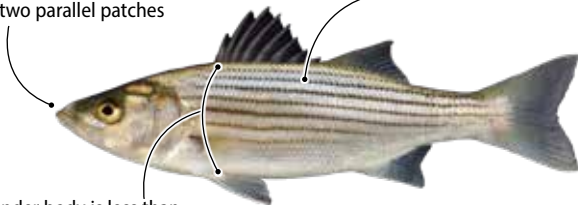
## Striped bass

teeth on back of tongue  
in two parallel patches

horizontal stripes

slender body is less than  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  the total body length

commonly reaches 20 pounds

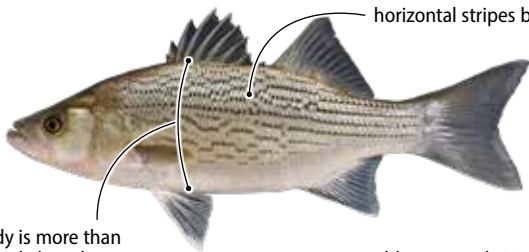


## White bass-striped bass hybrid

horizontal stripes broken

deep body is more than  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  total body length

seldom exceeds 20 pounds



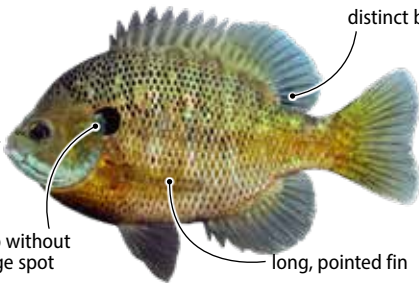
## Bluegill

very small  
mouth

distinct blotch

distinct ear flap without  
border or orange spot

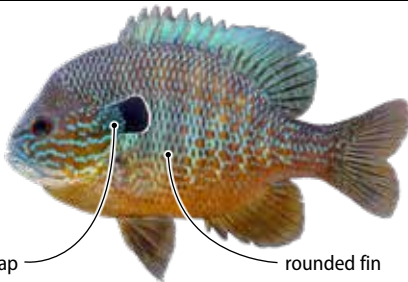
long, pointed fin



## Longear sunfish

long, dark ear flap

rounded fin

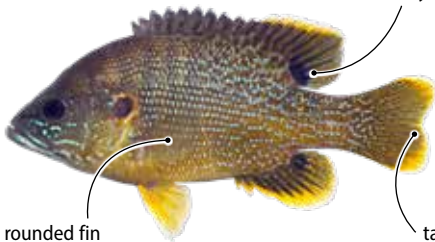


## Green sunfish

usually dark blotch

rounded fin

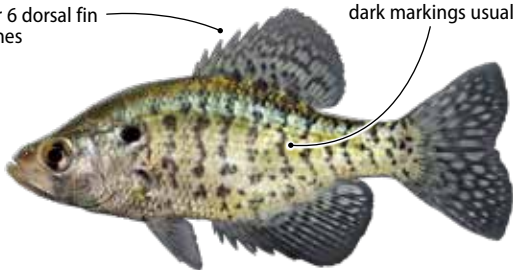
tail fin solid



## White crappie

5 or 6 dorsal fin spines

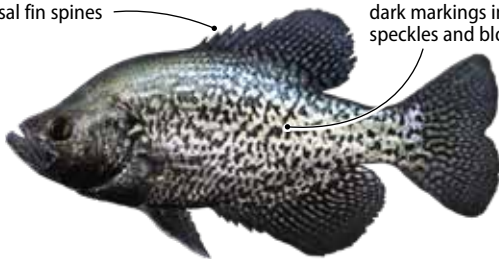
dark markings usually in bars



## Black crappie

7 or 8 dorsal fin spines

dark markings in irregular speckles and blotches



## Goggle-eye (Rock bass)

usually no dark blotch



tail fin mottled

## Flathead catfish

lower jaw extends  
beyond upper jaw

upper fin lighter than  
remainder of fin



tail fin square

## Blue catfish

upper jaw extends  
beyond lower jaw

tail fin forked



anal fin margin straight  
with 30–35 rays

## Channel catfish

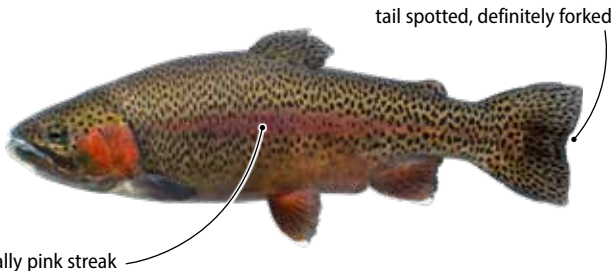
upper jaw extends  
beyond lower jaw

tail fin forked

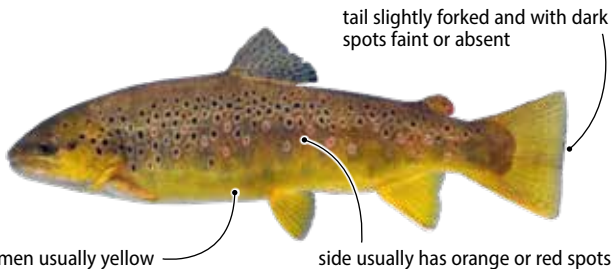


anal fin margin rounded  
with 24–29 rays

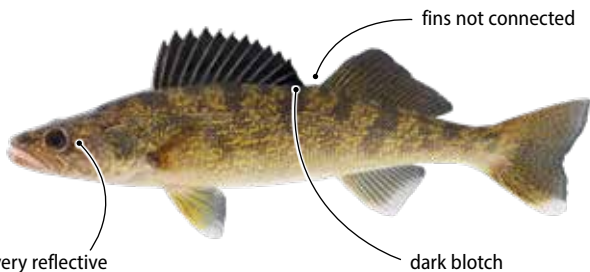
## Rainbow trout



## Brown trout

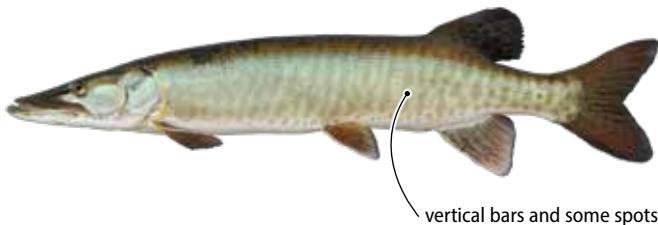


## Walleye



## Muskellunge

long and slender



## Northern hog sucker

prominent cross bars

tail forked

mouth at tip of  
snout on bottom

slender-bodied

## INVASIVE Common carp

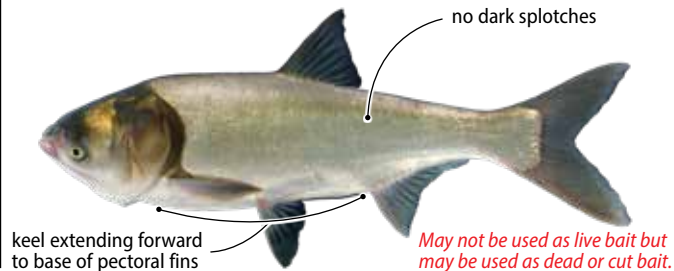
fin forked at front

barbels on each side

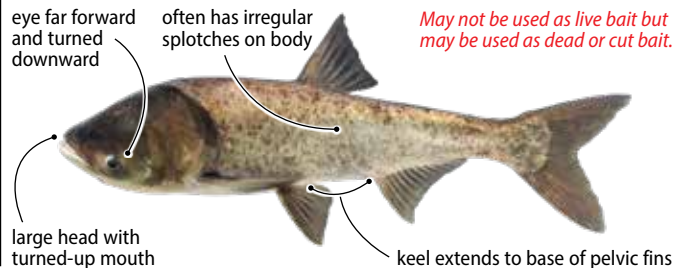
deep-bodied



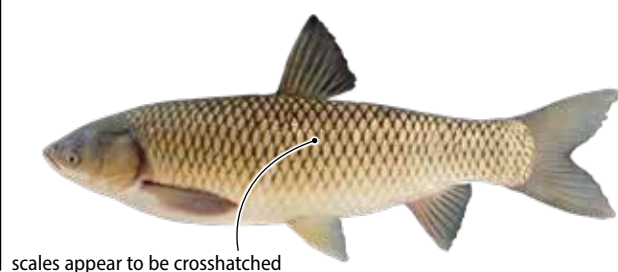
## INVASIVE Silver carp



## INVASIVE Bighead carp

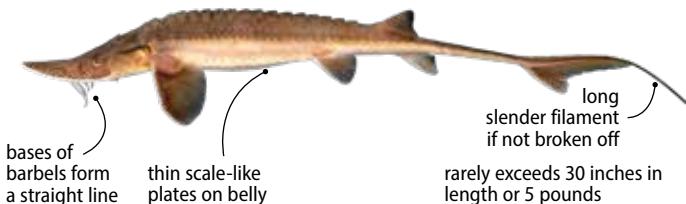


## INVASIVE Grass carp



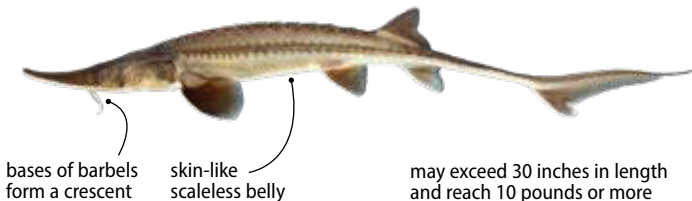
## Shovelnose sturgeon

Shovelnose sturgeon and endangered pallid sturgeon are similar.



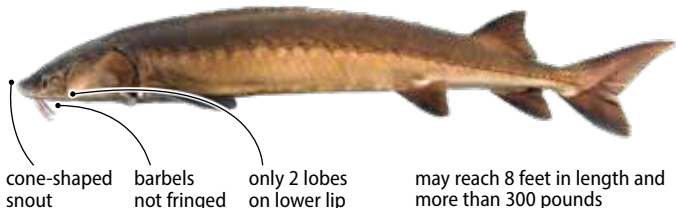
## ENDANGERED Pallid sturgeon

*Endangered species: If caught, return unharmed to water immediately.*



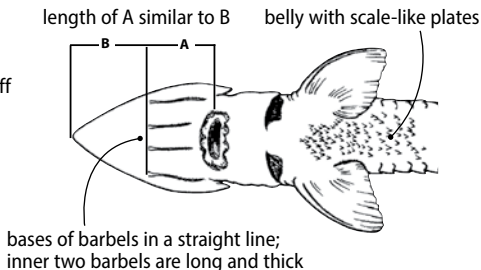
## ENDANGERED Lake sturgeon

*Endangered species: If caught, return unharmed to water immediately.*



■ reddish-brown or buff color

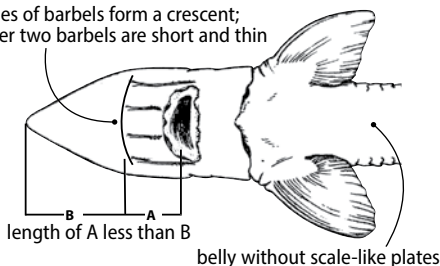
■ found throughout Missouri and Mississippi rivers



■ grayish-white color

■ found in the Missouri River and in the Mississippi downstream from the mouth of the Illinois River

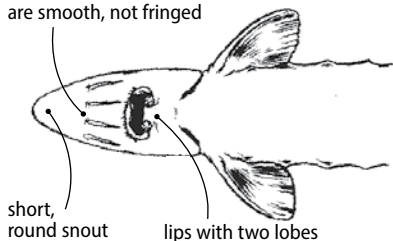
bases of barbels form a crescent; inner two barbels are short and thin



■ sides and back range from dark slate to light brown or yellowish-olive; white belly

■ found throughout Missouri and Mississippi rivers

barbels near mouth are smooth, not fringed



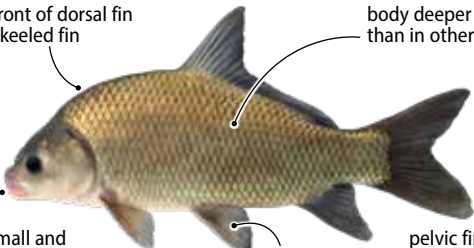
## Smallmouth buffalo

back in front of dorsal fin  
strongly keeled fin

body deeper and thinner  
than in other buffalos

mouth small and  
projects downward

pelvic fins  
densley speckled with black

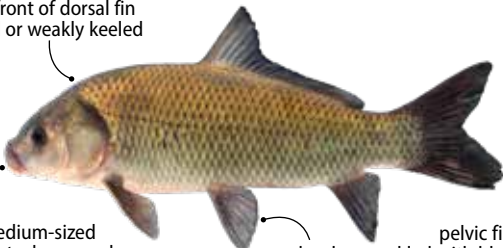


## Black buffalo

back in front of dorsal fin  
rounded or weakly keeled

mouth medium-sized  
and projects downward

pelvic fins  
densley speckled with black



## Bigmouth buffalo

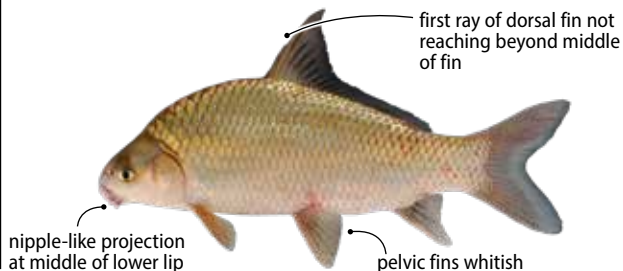
back in front of dorsal fin  
rounded or weakly keeled

mouth large and  
projects forward

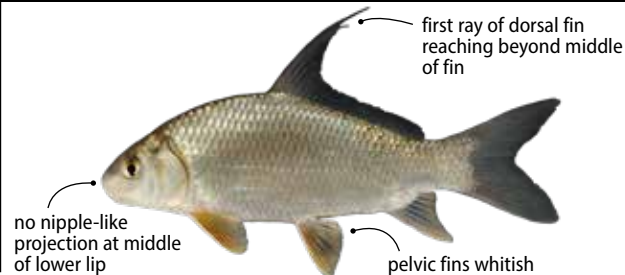
pelvic fins  
densley speckled with black



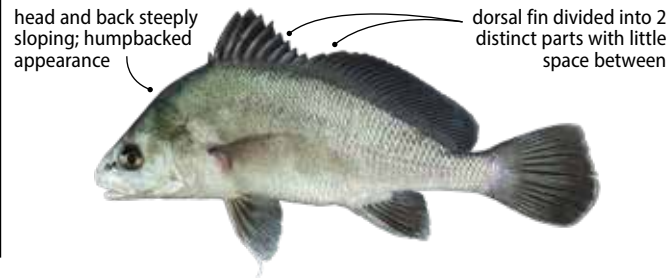
## River carpsucker



## Quillback



## Freshwater drum



## Spotted gar

many well-defined roundish black spots on top of head and all fins

snout long and moderately broad



## Longnose gar

well-defined roundish black spots on rear of the body and rear fins only

snout extremely long and narrow



## Shortnose gar

well-defined black spots on rear fins only

snout long and moderately broad



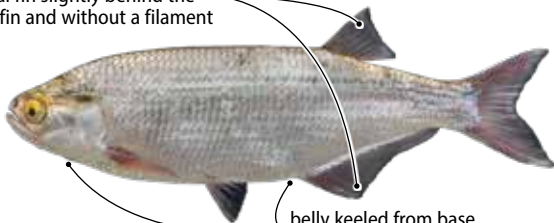
## Alligator gar



Snout short and broad with double row of teeth in upper jaw

## Goldeye

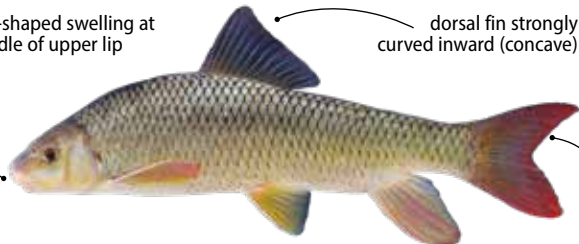
dorsal fin slightly behind the anal fin and without a filament



belly keeled from base of anal fin nearly to throat

## Shorthead redhorse

pea-shaped swelling at middle of upper lip



dorsal fin strongly curved inward (concave)

tail fin bright red

## Fishing trip checklist

- Fishing license
- Rod and reel
- Tackle box (with needle nose pliers, wire cutting pliers, nail clippers)
- Water and snacks
- Bait and lures
- Stringer
- Landing net
- First-aid kit
- Personal floatation device (PFD)
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Fish identification guide

Fishing Prospects — **[fishing.mdc.mo.gov](https://fishing.mdc.mo.gov)**

MO Fishing App — **[short.mdc.mo.gov/ZJZ](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZJZ)**



CONSERVATION MAKES MISSOURI A  
GREAT PLACE TO HUNT AND FISH.

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